IN THE CLAIMS

Please delete all prior claim lists in the application and insert the following claim list:

1.   [PREVIOUSLY-AMENDED] A method for detecting multiple sclerosis, Creutzfeld-Jakob disease, or spongiform encephalopathy in mammals which comprises testing a biological sample obtained from the mammal for IgA antibodies which bind to *Acinetobacter* species.

2.   [ORIGINAL] A method according to claim 1, in which the *Acinetobacter* is one which presents to the mammal an antigen which exhibits molecular mimicry with the myelin of the mammal.

3.   [PREVIOUSLY-AMENDED] A method according to claim 1, in which the antibodies are indicative of prior exposure to *Acinetobacter calcoaceticus*.

4.   [CANCEL] ~~A method according to claim 1, in which the antibodies tested for are antibodies which bind to an antigen present in or derived from the *Acinetobacter* species or to a prepared peptide sequence corresponding thereto.~~

5.   [PREVIOUSLY-AMENDED] A method according to claim 1, in which the disease tested for is bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

6.   [PREVIOUSLY-AMENDED] A method according to claim 1, in which the disease tested for is multiple sclerosis in humans.

7.   [PREVIOUSLY-AMENDED] A method according to claim 1, in which the disease tested for is Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease in humans.

8.   [ORIGINAL] A method according to claim 1, in which antibodies are assayed and a positive result is indicated by levels of antibodies at least about two standard deviations above that of control samples.

9.   [AMENDED HEREIN] A test kit for detecting multiple sclerosis, Creutzfeld-Jakob disease, or spongiform encephalopathy in mammals, the test kit comprising ~~a test antigen, and wherein the test antigen is~~ whole *Acinetobacter* organism ~~or at least one prepared peptide sequence corresponding to an *Acinetobacter* antigen, the test kit including~~ and a secondary antibody against human, bovine, or other mammalian IgA.

10. [CANCEL] ~~A method according to claim 1, in which the antibodies tested for are antibodies which bind to a peptide sequence that has sufficient conformational similarity to an *Acinetobacter* antigen such that the antibodies tested for are cross-reactive with the *Acinetobacter* antigen.~~

11. [CANCEL] ~~A method according to claim 10, in which the antigen contains the peptide sequence ISRFAWGEV (SEQ. ID. NO: 2).~~

12. [CANCEL] ~~A method according to claim 10, in which the antigen contains the peptide sequence RFSAWGAE (SEQ. ID. NO: 1).~~

13. [CANCEL] ~~A test kit for detecting multiple sclerosis, Creutzfeld-Jakob disease, or spongiform encephalopathy in mammals, the test kit comprising a test antigen, and wherein the test antigen is a peptide sequence which is conformationally sufficiently similar to an *Acinetobacter* antigen to bind to antibodies that bind to the *Acinetobacter* antigen, the test kit including a secondary antibody against human, bovine, or other mammalian IgA.~~

14. [CANCEL] ~~A test kit according to claim 13, comprising a peptide having the sequence RFSAWGAE (SEQ. ID. NO: 1) or ISRFAWGEV (SEQ. ID. NO: 2).~~

15. [CANCEL] ~~A test kit according to claim 9, in which the secondary antibody is a rabbit anti-human IgA or rabbit anti-bovine IgA.~~

16. [CANCEL] ~~A method according to Claim 2, in which the antigen is a peptide containing the sequence ISRFAWGEV (SEQ. ID. NO: 2).~~

17. [PREVIOUSLY-ADDED] A method according to claim 1, in which antibodies are assayed and a positive result is indicated by levels of antibodies significantly higher than that of control samples.

18. [CANCEL] ~~A test kit for detecting multiple sclerosis, Creutzfeld-Jakob disease, or spongiform encephalopathy in mammals, the test kit comprising:~~

    ~~a test antigen specific for antibodies to an *Acinetobacter* species, wherein the *Acinetobacter* species contains an antigen which exhibits molecular mimicry with myelin of the mammal; and~~

    ~~an antibody that specifically reacts with IgA components of the antibodies to an *Acinetobacter* species.~~